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5 THINGS TO KNOW

WELCOME TO METRO PHILLY

MATT JUUL, NATIONAL FEATURES EDITOR

Despite dealing with some serious health issues, North Philadelphia's own Freeway somehow managed to get back into booth to record his sixth studio record, "Think Free," which debuts this summer. Ahead of the album's release, the local hip-hop star opens up to Metro about his recent struggles with kidney failure, reuniting with Jay-Z and RocNation for the new record, getting into the beard cream business, plus what he really thinks about President Donald Trump.

1 CONSPIRACY THEORIST ALEX JONES DROPPED

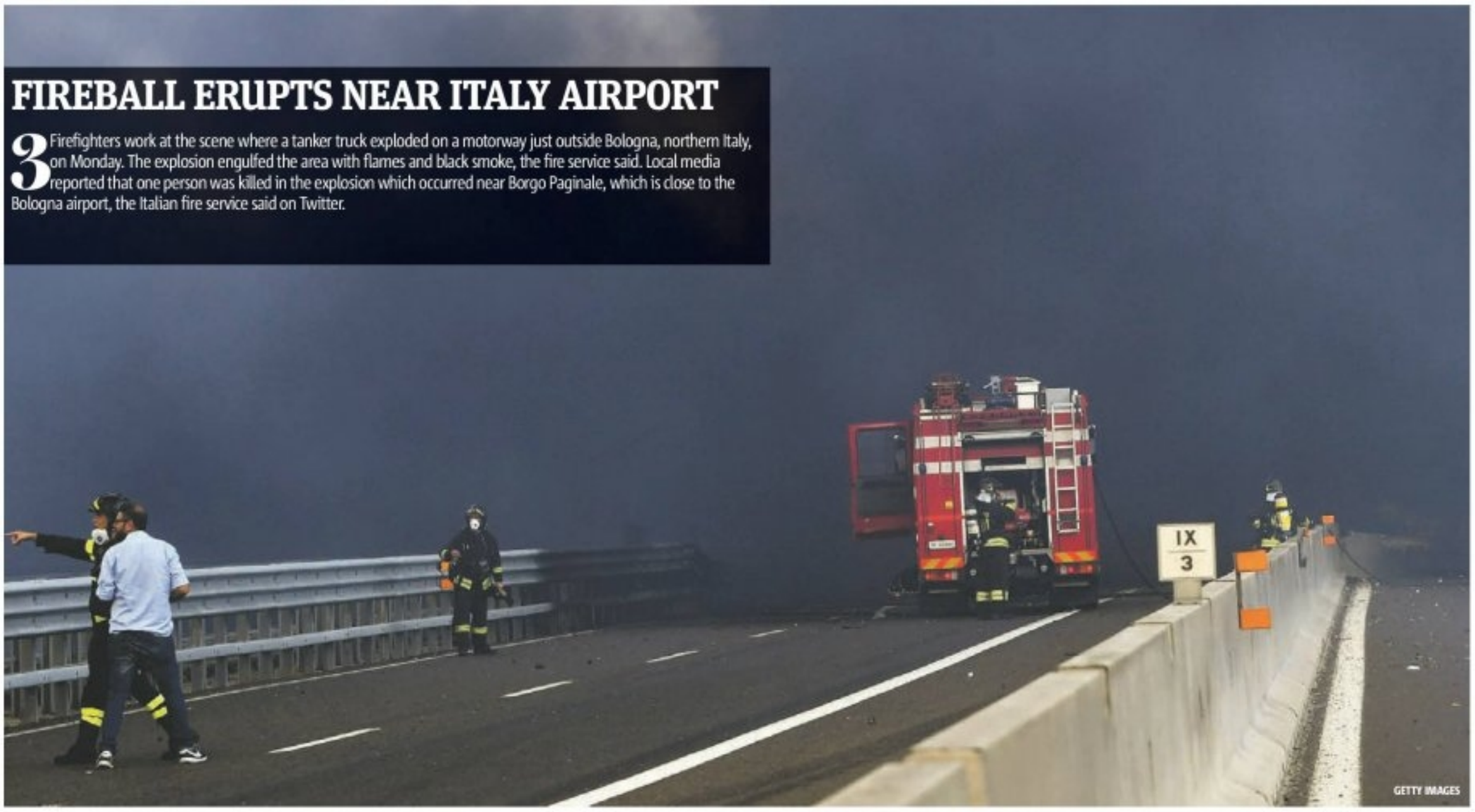
Apple Inc., Alphabet Inc.'s YouTube, Facebook Inc. and Spotify all took down podcasts and channels from U.S. conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, saying on Monday that the Infowars author had broken community standards. The sweeping moves are the broadest actions yet by internet companies that previously have suspended or removed some of the conspiracy-driven content produced by Infowars. Since founding Infowars in 1999, Jones has built a vast audience. Among the theories he has promoted is that the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington were staged by the government. Facebook said it removed Alex Jones pages "for glorifying violence, which violates our graphic violence policy, and using dehumanizing language to describe people who are transgender, Muslims and immigrants, which violates our hate speech policies." The Infowars app remained available on the app stores hosted by Apple and Alphabet's Google Play, however, while Twitter Inc. said that Infowars accounts were not currently in violation of its rules.

2 STAR WITNESS ADMITS TO CRIMES WITH MANAFORT

Rick Gates, a longtime business associate of President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, on Monday testified at trial that he helped Manafort file false tax returns and did not disclose foreign bank accounts. Gates was expected to be a star witness in the government's case against Manafort, having pleaded guilty in February, and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors under a deal that could lead to a reduced sentence."We did not submit the required form designating he had control over an offshore account," Gates told the jury in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, on the fifth day of the trial. When prosecutor Greg Andres asked why, Gates replied: "At Mr. Manafort's direction." Gates also testified he and Manafort knew it was a crime because they had been notified by Manafort's accountants in emails. Manafort's attorneys have signaled they will seek to blame Gates and have accused him of embezzling millions of dollars from Manafort. Gates and Manafort have known each other for two decades and ran a multimillion-dollar political consulting business.

3 FIREBALL ERUPTS NEAR ITALY AIRPORT

Firefighters work at the scene where a tanker truck exploded on a motorway just outside Bologna, northern Italy, on Monday. The explosion engulfed the area with flames and black smoke, the fire service said. Local media reported that one person was killed in the explosion which occurred near Borgo Paginale, which is close to the Bologna airport, the Italian fire service said on Twitter.



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4 SCREEN LEGEND REDFORD TO RETIRE FROM ACTING

Oscar winner Robert Redford will retire from acting following this autumn's "The Old Man & The Gun," the 81-year-old told Entertainment Weekly. Redford, best known for films such as "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," plays a seasoned bank robber in the new movie, which is scheduled to debut in theaters in September. "Never say never, but I pretty well concluded that this would be it for me in terms of acting, and [I'll] move toward retirement after this because I've been doing it since I was 21," Redford told the magazine. "I thought, well, that's enough. And why not go out with something that's very upbeat and positive?" he added. In the film, Redford plays Forrest Tucker, a real-life career criminal who was caught robbing banks 17 times. Each time he was jailed but managed to escape. "To me, that was a wonderful character to play at this point in my life," Redford said of Tucker, whose robberies spanned more than 60 years. "It made me wonder: I wonder if he was not averse to getting caught so that he could enjoy the real thrill of his life, which is to escape?"

5 AT LEAST 40 SHOT, 4 KILLED IN CHICAGO GUN VIOLENCE

At least 40 people were shot in Chicago between midnight Saturday and early Sunday morning, with four fatalities, city police said Sunday, a stark violent streak in a city where authorities say gun violence has been decreasing this year. "These were both random and targeted shootings on our streets," said Fred Waller, chief of the patrol division of the Chicago Police Department, in a press conference. He said most of the shootings are connected to gang violence in the city of about 2.7 million people, the third-largest in the United States. Police said gunmen targeted a block party, a gathering after a funeral, and other gatherings on a night where thousands of people gathered for a downtown concert. Local media reported that the brunt of the violence happened in the city's West Side, where 25 people were shot in separate attacks. Waller touted that shootings in 2018 were down from last year. The Chicago Tribune, which has been tracking shooting statistics, reported earlier this month that shootings in the city have declined, with 533 fewer shootings as of Aug. 1 than the same time in 2017.

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[1] "Employment of New Nurse Graduates and Employer Preferences for Baccalaureate-Prepared Nurses," American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2013.

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Connie was one of the Golden Doodles surrendered to the PSPCA from a Chesco kennel after her owners pleaded guilty to hanging two sick dogs. COURTESY OF PSPCA

Breeders who hung sick dogs plead guilty: PSPCA

A Chesco couple cannot own pets for 10 years after pleading guilty to hanging dogs on their farm.

SAM NEWHOUSE
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A Chester County couple pleaded guilty to charges stemming from the hanging of two dogs at their kennel earlier this year, and are both banned from owning animals for several years, the PSPCA announced Monday.

John and Elizabeth "Betty" Stoltzfus, of Parkesburg, were charged with multiple counts of animal cruelty in March for the hanging of two female dogs, a Bichon-type and golden doodle-type dog, at their kennel and then burning the bodies. Both dogs had brucellosis, a bacterial infection, which is treatable, and is why they decided to euthanize the dogs by hanging — which is illegal.

"This case involved especially heinous acts of animal cruelty, including the intentionally torturous deaths of two dogs," PSPCA Director of Humane Law Enforcement Nicole Wilson said in a statement. "While we can never undo this damage, we can take some solace in knowing that this couple will not own animals for a very long time."

According to state Department of Agriculture Bureau of Dog Law kennel records, Betty Stoltzfus admitted hanging the dogs during an inspection in August 2017, at a time when the kennel had 11 dogs and 34 puppies on site.

"Two dogs previously on the premises were no longer there," according to the report. "The kennel owner stated that her husband took care of the dogs via hanging."

After receiving the Bureau of Dog Law's report, PSPCA Humane Law Enforcement officers investigated and brought charges against the Stoltzfuses, who have been repeatedly cited for various violations at their kennel over the years.

Betty Stoltzfus pleaded guilty to failure to notify the Bureau of Dog Law before euthanasia, and failure to maintain a sanitary, humane kennel, and got a two-year animal ownership prohibition.

"While we can never undo this damage, we can take some solace in knowing that this couple will not own animals for a very long time."
Nicole Wilson, PSPCA director of humane law enforcement

John Stoltzfus pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor charges of animal cruelty and can not own animals for the 10 years, the PSPCA said.

The couple also had to surrender the remaining two golden doodles in their possession to the PSPCA, which will adopt them out.

The double hanging allegedly occurred in early August 2017, just weeks before Libre's Law took effect in Pennsylvania, which would have made these crimes felonies, the PSPCA said.

To report animal cruelty, call the PSPCA's Cruelty Hotline at 866-601-7722.

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Star witness testifies he committed crimes with Manafort

Rick Gates GETTY IMAGES

> Among the crimes, Rick Gates said he failed to disclose foreign bank accounts, required by law.

Rick Gates, a longtime business associate of President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, on Monday testified at trial that he helped Manafort file false tax returns and did not disclose foreign bank accounts.

Gates was expected to be a star witness in the government's case against Manafort having pleaded guilty in February and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors under a deal that could lead to a reduced sentence.

"We did not submit the required form designating he had control over an offshore account," Gates told the jury in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, on the fifth day of the trial.

When prosecutor Greg Andres asked why, Gates replied: "At Mr. Manafort's direction."

Gates also testified he and Manafort knew it was a crime because they had been notified by Manafort's accountants in emails.

Manafort's attorneys have signaled they will seek to blame Gates and have accused him of embezzling millions of dollars from Manafort. Gates and Manafort have known each other for two decades and ran a multimillion-dollar political consulting business. Gates also worked for the Trump election campaign.

Manafort has pleaded not guilty to 18 counts of bank and tax fraud and failing to disclose foreign bank accounts. The charges largely predate his five months on the Trump campaign but were the first to go to trial arising from Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

The jury has heard how Manafort made tens of millions of dollars for work with pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine. Mueller is also investigating possible coordination between Trump campaign members and Russian officials in the election campaign, but the charges against Manafort do not address that.

Prosecutors on Monday went through a list of overseas corporations and Gates testified that all of them were controlled by Manafort and contained income earned by his political consulting work.

Gates said an associate, Konstantin Klimnik, had control over the overseas accounts. Klimnik is a Russian-Ukrainian political consultant who was indicted in June on charges stemming from the Mueller probe.

Gates testified that Manafort directed him to report overseas income as loans in order to lower taxable income and that at Manafort's request, did not disclose foreign bank accounts, which is required by law. REUTERS

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LeBron James praised by Ohio school district after Trump attack

LeBron James GETTY IMAGES

NBA star LeBron James won praise on Monday from an Ohio school district for his support of disadvantaged children in his hometown of Akron, after President Donald Trump attacked him in a weekend tweet questioning his intelligence.

The president lashed out at James after the three-time NBA champion was interviewed by CNN's Don Lemon largely to tout a public school in Akron, Ohio that his foundation helped to open last week. During the interview James said sports was something that unites Americans but that Trump "used sport to kind of divide us," drawing the retaliatory tweet from the president.

The "I Promise" public school in Akron, which opened last week, will offer classes for "at-risk" students in the third and fourth grades and add first and second grades the following year, the foundation website said. The school will be finished by 2022 with first through eighth grades.

James also promised a free bicycle and helmets for students and vowed to pay tuition to the University of Akron for I Promise graduates, among other things.

"Anyone that's done what LeBron James has done for the past decade to 15 years for our children to prepare them to flourish in life has to be an intelligent person," Akron Public Schools spokesman Mark Williamson said in a telephone interview on Monday. "He's a bright guy, end of story."

The comment came after Trump on Friday had tweeted "Lebron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made Lebron look smart, which isn't easy to do. I like Mike!"

The president's "I like Mike!" comment was an apparent reference to the perennial sports debate over whether six-time NBA champion Michael Jordan, or James, a four-time league most valuable player, was the NBA's all-time best player.

Jordan, who rarely wades into the political fray, and other U.S. athletes rallied to James' defense on Saturday, praising him for his work in his community.

James, a persistent critic of Trump and prominent supporter of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, last month announced his decision to leave the Cleveland Cavaliers for a second time, this time to play for the Los Angeles Lakers.

In response to Lemon asking what James would say to the president if he were sitting right there, the NBA star said: "I would never sit across from him. ... I'd sit across from Barack though," referring to Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama.

Trump has lambasted NFL players who knelt during playing of the national anthem as a form of protest against law enforcement's treatment of racial minorities. And he has disinvited championship teams whose members have been critical of him from traditional White House visits.

First lady Melania Trump also appeared to take exception with her husband's attack on James.

"It looks like LeBron James is working to do good things on behalf of our next generation and just as she always has, the first lady encourages everyone to have an open dialogue about issues facing children today," a statement issued by Melania Trump's spokeswoman said. REUTERS

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Men splash in the water as people beat the heat at the fountain of Logan Square in July. GETTY IMAGES

Philly heat wave brings 100-degree temps

With the mercury near 90 all week, city officials advise keeping cool and staying hydrated.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

The dog days of August are here, and the Philly heat is rising.

Philadelphia has been through the wringer this summer, with weather systems alternating rapidly between intense humidity and heavy downpours. Locals don't know what to expect next.

This week, brutal heat is forecast, and started with a heat index of 100 to 104 degrees Monday. High temps are expected to continue into Tuesday and possibly through Thursday.

A heat advisory was put in effect by the National Weather Service for Southeastern Pennsylvania, most of New Jersey and northern Delaware on Monday morning running through at least Tuesday afternoon, with the possibility of a new advisory being released after that.

That means high temperatures that could be dangerous are forecast for those areas, and residents, particularly vulnerable citizens like the sick, elderly or very young, should stay cool and hydrated to avoid any health risks.

"Hot and humid conditions are expected to continue into Tuesday," the National Weather Service Mount Holly Station said in an advisory released Monday. "The heat and humidity may cause heat stress during outdoor exertion or extended exposure."

The National Weather Service urged the public to exercise caution and look out for signs of heat stroke, particularly for those working outdoors.

> **"The heat and humidity may cause heat stress during outdoor exertion or extended exposure."**
> National Weather Service Mount Holly Station

Temperatures were forecast to stay in the upper 80s and 90s through Friday, although cloudier skies were forecast and possibly thunderstorms could be on the tap for Wednesday.

Thursday is expected to be sunny again. But thunderstorms and temperatures in the mid-80s were forecast for the weekend.

It's the second real heat wave of the summer; the first was June 30 to July 5, when temps hit triple digits over the Fourth of July holiday week.

How to avoid heat stroke

- Know the signs of heat stroke, like headache, lightheadedness, muscle cramps, nausea or vomiting. Call 911 if you or someone else shows any signs.
- Stay hydrated — even if you don't feel thirsty. And be sure to keep your pets hydrated on their walks, too.
- Stay out of the sun if possible, but if you have to be outside, be sure to wear at least SPF 15 and a hat for protection and dress in lightweight, light-colored, loose clothing.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the peak sun hours between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- If you don't have an air conditioner, consider going to one of the city's public pools or air-conditioned areas like libraries, movie theaters or one of the city's many cooling centers — you can find your nearest cooling center via 311.

Additional reporting by Nikki M. Mascoli

Local home-care provider leading with compassion

Illuminated Hearts

ASK ILLUMINATED HEARTS:

Watching a loved one struggle with everyday tasks can be heartbreaking. Restoring their independence may seem impossible, especially for family and friends who don't feel qualified to provide the level of care that's needed. For too long, transitioning to live-in support facilities has been the answer—but there's one home-care provider that's changing the game. Metro caught up with Illuminated Hearts to unpack the details.

What is Illuminated Hearts all about and what do you bring to the community?

Illuminated Hearts is a compassionate, Philadelphia-based home-care company. Our mission is simple but powerful—to provide assistance to those in need so they can live as independently as possible. This means keeping families together by allowing people who'd otherwise be placed into support facilities to continue living at home. We deliver the support to them, thanks to our pool of top-talent staff. Illuminated Hearts even trains and compensates family members to provide appropriate care.

How was it started?

Illuminated Hearts came to life when one of our founders was searching for home care for one of her parents, but was terribly dissatisfied with her options. She did tons of research and interviews, but none of the agencies she vetted seemed able to provide the level of compassionate care she needed. The experience left her inspired to start a home-care company that prioritized clients above all else.

What's your mission and how does it relate to your core values?

What drives us is delivering the exceptional home health care services that our co-founder was looking for herself. Our endgame is to help clients retain their independence and live their best lives; something our "I.C.A.R.E."© value system guides us toward. It stands for: Integrity Compassion, Ability, Respect and Enthusiasm. Our staff really lives these values in every interaction with clients.

What makes Illuminated Hearts different from other home-care providers?

We care for our clients and staff as if they were our own family, and we truly have a client-based approach. We routinely go above and beyond to make sure they're receiving the best quality of care possible. We want them to lead rich, independent lives, and this desire sets us apart from other providers.

I'm concerned that someone I love might need home care. What's the first step I should take?

The journey begins with an initial phone call where one of our intake specialists can assess your situation and weigh in with the best path forward. The home-care process doesn't have to be complicated and intimidating. The Illuminated Hearts team is devoted to breaking down the ins and outs for everyday people so that their loved ones can get the care they deserve.

Illuminated Hearts is located at 2231 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 2. Searching for home care for someone you love? Learn more by visiting www.ICareForPA.com or calling (215) 921-6624.

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Philly cop shot by confused homeowner, who is killed by return fire

SWAT team officer Jaison Potts was shot in the jaw by a homeowner, now dead, who thought he was being robbed by police executing a warrant.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

A Philly homeowner who didn't hear a SWAT team knocking on his door shot a Philly police officer in the face while "defending his home," before being fatally on Monday, according to investigators.

"This is an all-out, absolute tragedy, all the way around," Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross told media at a press conference on Monday, hours after Philly SWAT team officer Jaison Potts was shot while executing a "high-risk" warrant on the 4800 block of Knox Street in Germantown for a 20-year-old suspect who was not found in the home.

The suspect who the warrant was issued for was wanted for weapons charges. He was the grandson of the couple in the home, which was listed as his address, Ross said. He turned himself into police on Monday after the shooting.

Potts, 49, a 20-year veteran of the department, is a married father of three. Potts is still listed in critical condition and was due for surgery Tuesday to have a bullet removed from his jaw. Potts now faces a long road to recovery ahead of him.

The 59-year-old homeowner who shot Potts, who had not been identified as of press time, died after Potts' partner returned fire.

> **"This is an all-out, absolute tragedy, all the way around."**
>
> Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross

"It appears that he was defending his home, and that tragically he just didn't hear that police announcement," Ross said.

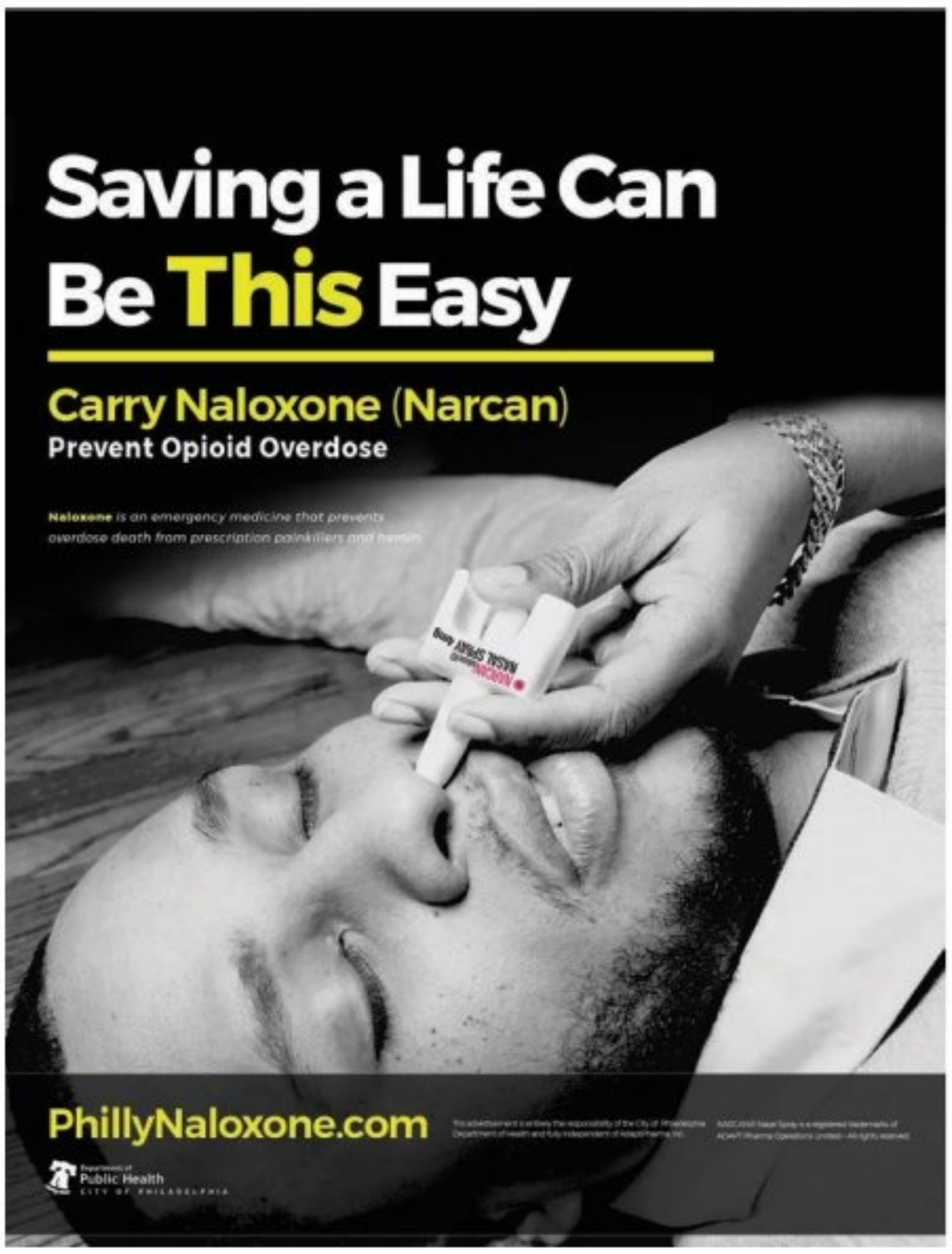
His wife, 67, the mother-in-law of a Philly cop, was also injured by what Ross said may have been a ricocheting fragment of a shotgun shell fired by police.

While details are still murky, police say the SWAT team was serving a warrant at the Germantown home around 6:06 a.m.

Ross said that the police knocked on the door and announced themselves at least three times, which neighbors said they heard. But Ross said the homeowner is believed to have been watching TV and not heard police. Some reports say he had hearing problems.

After police opened a door to an outdoor patio, as they got to the second door, Potts was shot in the face, taking a bullet to the jaw. They never got inside the home, and Ross said bullets that hit Potts were fired through a wooden frame.

"It appears at this point that the home-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HOME CARE

Jaison Potts is in critical condition after being shot in the jaw in Germantown by a confused homeowner who was fatally shot by Potts' partner. Police are investigating. PPD

owner thought someone was breaking in his home," Ross said. "He instructed his wife to flee out the back ... and he, I guess, went about the business of protecting his home, not knowing it was police at the door that he was firing upon."

Potts' partner returned fire, striking the homeowner in the chest. The homeowner was later pronounced dead at Albert Einstein Medical Center. His wife was in stable condition at Albert Einstein.

SWAT typically serves 300 high-risk warrants a year. The last time shots were even fired during the execution of such a warrant was in 2015.

Monday's incident remains under investigation.

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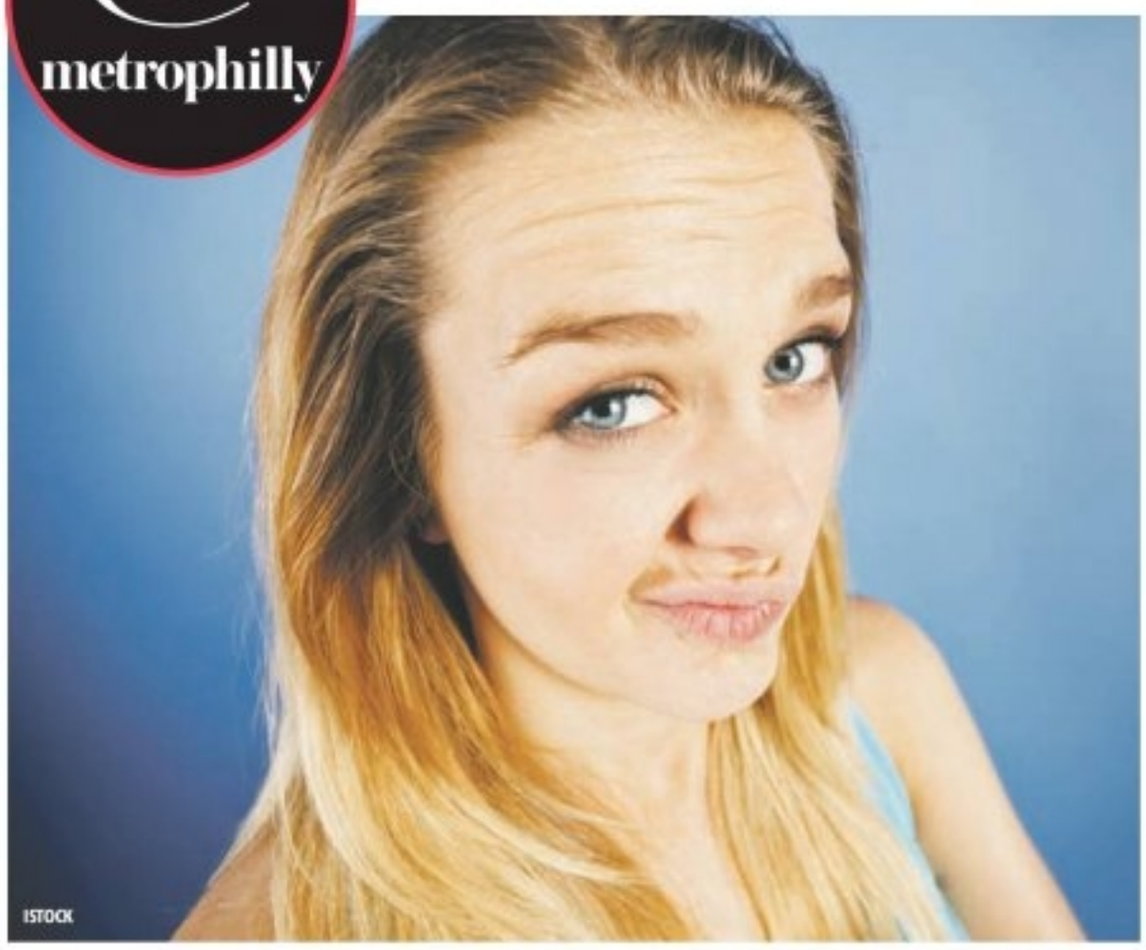
ISTOCK

Pat King
Grumble Editor

READER WRITE-INS:

GIVE ME MY PENNY BACK!!!
What gives local small stores and newsstands the right to hold back my change if it's a penny? I buy the same magazine every week, costing $1.99, at the same newsstand. Most weeks, I am not offered the penny change before leaving, depending on the employee on duty. One week, I asked for it and was laughed at. The same happens at a few neighborhood grocery stores. One of the owners manages the register at one of the stores and he never gives back the penny change unless I ask for it. Yes, it's only a penny. But, think about how many times a year I make purchases without getting my change back. It all adds up, and it annoys me!
- **Sarah Weiss**, *Metro New York reader*

THE SIDEWALK "TWO-STEP"
We've all done the sidewalk "two-step": You're walking on the sidewalk and someone is walking toward you and we both do the two-step to avoid walking into each other. I figure the rule of thumb, in the USA anyway, is to stay to the right just as you would if you were driving down the street, we stay to the right. So when walking down the sidewalk if we all just stay to the right we could avoid the awkward two-step. The escalator is another issue. In Europe there are signs posted to be read while your on the escalator "standing stay to the right and walking/passing on the left" or something like that. Some people like me walk up the escalator, although if I'm feeling particularly lazy I'll stand and enjoy the ride. But why make everyone behind me wait if they want to walk up the escalator by standing on the left side?
- **Dave Pearson**, *Metro Boston reader*

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The winning caption from David Lindhagen, *Metro Boston reader*

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Aries Mingle, participate and do your best to bring about positive change. Your contributions will lead to new opportunities. Personal improvements, love and travel are highlighted.

Taurus Keep your life simple and your relationships honest and straightforward. Making matters more complicated will slow you down and lead to waste and disappointment.

Gemini Compromise may not turn out well for both parties. Use your intelligence and only give back what you receive. It's up to you not to let anyone take advantage of you.

Cancer Know who you are dealing with before you get involved. Do your research before you make a promise to someone who may have ulterior motives.

Leo Kick back and relax. You deserve a break. Don't feel pressured to keep up or give in to someone's pestering. A moment to yourself will get you back on track.

Virgo Keep a close watch on how others react. A partnership will undergo an emotional change due to someone's indiscretion. Be prepared to make a lifestyle change.

Libra Personal improvements are favored. Whether you fix up your living space or focus on physical improvements that will lift your spirits, the changes will make a difference.

Scorpio Focus on what you enjoy doing and people with whom you have much in common. Avoid conflict or anyone trying to manipulate you to do things you don't want to do.

Sagittarius Share your feelings with a partner or someone you want to spend more time with. Make your intentions and expectations known. Honesty will help you reach an agreement.

Capricorn You may be eager to make personal changes, but without the approval of those you feel responsible for, it will be difficult to move forward. Make a passionate appeal for your cause.

Aquarius Be open about your plans and keep moving forward. Listen to suggestions, but don't get in over your head. Moderation and practicality will lead to success.

Pisces Look over contracts, financial papers and medical records for clues that will help you put an end to waste. A novel plan will encourage practical applications. EUGENIA LAST

'Ballers' star Rob Corddry on the Rock's sex appeal

Ahead of season 4's debut, the comic actor discusses working with Dwayne Johnson on the hit HBO series.

ANDREW HUSBAND
letters@metro.us

"Ballers" season 4 debuts this weekend. ALL PHOTOS HBO

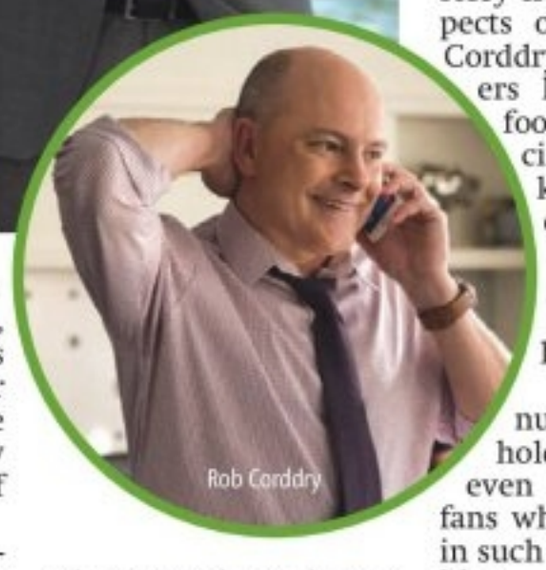
When "Ballers" star Rob Corddry is approached by a fan, he generally knows what they're going to ask him about based on several profiles he has developed over the years.

"If they're 60 to 70-year-old Alan Alda types with NPR tote bags and round eyeglasses, they're usually asking about 'The Daily Show.' But 'Ballers' is tougher," he laughs. "The people who most often come up to me on the street and say something about 'Ballers' are women, which surprised me at first. It didn't strike me as a show that females would like."

The "Hot Tub Time Machine" actor doesn't possess the numbers to prove this, but he's pretty sure he knows why all these women watch the program. "I think the Rock is very appealing to women. He's appealing to everyone," says Corddry, "but I imagine the women like him very much as well."

For the past three seasons, Corddry and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson have played sports financial consultants Joe Krutel and Spencer Strasmore in "Entourage" and "Boardwalk Empire" alum Stephen Levinson's "Ballers." In season four, which premieres this Sunday on HBO, the pair attempts to recuperate season three's losses by delving into the world of extreme sports.

Throughout the series, Spencer and Joe have had what Corddry describes as a "push and pull" relationship, professionally and otherwise. Sometimes they're on the same page, sometimes not. Now that they're trying to come out on top this season, the partners are working together as uniformly as possible. As the Corddry notes, he prefers it this way for a particular reason.



Rob Corddry

"I like acting with Dwayne. I like hanging out with him. He's fun to be on set with," he says. "If our characters are at odds, that usually means I'm going to have scenes with somebody else and our storylines will veer away from each other. So if I had choose one path, I like it when we're a team working together rather than not."

Joe and Spencer's story is one of many aspects of "Ballers" that Corddry, who considers himself an avid football fan, appreciates. He also acknowledges the depths Levinson and the writers go to infuse the show with such human elements.

Crunching numbers doesn't hold his interest, even when "Ballers" fans who are interested in such details approach him.

"They want to talk stats," he says. "I'm a big, big football fan, but I don't remember who scored the most points on the ground for the Rams. I'm more into the drama and romance of a football game, the poetry of it. I've actually had a couple of sports financial managers contact me on Twitter, offering their consulting services. You know what? I think I know enough. What we're doing, in terms of the numbers, isn't brain surgery.

"Numbers and stats and weird obscure things do not a good story make," Corddry adds with a laugh. Even so, he recognizes the importance of the subject material to the core of the "Ballers" story, as well as the effect it has had on his wife's understanding of sports.

"My wife, who can't stand sports, was watching a football game with me, and the guy did a flip over the endzone," he recalls. "Just from having watched 'Ballers,' and what she absorbed from it, my wife went, 'You're going to do a flip in the endzone? Come on, you're making 10 over 7!' And I just fell more in love with her at that moment."

"Ballers" season 4 premieres Sunday, Aug. 12, at 10 p.m. on HBO.

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Freeway talks Jay-Z, Donald Trump and 'Think Free'

Philly's most dynamic rapper (and businessman) returns with a new album.

A.D. AMOROSI
letters@metro.us

Freeway's new album "Think Free' debuts Tuesday. ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

There was a time when if you spoke to Freeway — the North Philadelphia rapper, lyricist and producer born Leslie Pridgen — that most of the serious discussion would be about the theology of the streets. Free's devout connection to the Muslim religion and his skill as hard realist writer and MC made him the perfect fit for Jay-Z's label. Hova made Freeway one of the first signings to his Roc-A-Fella dynasty.

Now, 15 years after his debut, "Philadelphia Freeway," Free has much more on his mind, and tons more to be thankful for, starting with an album, "Think Free," which comes out Aug. 7, one day before his 39th birthday. A celebration at FYE Philadelphia Mills on Franklin Mills Circle marks the occasion.

"God is good," Freeway says softly on a Saturday morning, considering all that he's been through and made happen, all with positive results.

There's his Best Beard Cream brand of all-organic tonsorial grooming and health-care products that "the beard of hip-hop," co-created three years ago, right on trend-time for the explosion of men's furry facial hair. "The product line's going good, and we're adding new products like shampoo, as well as new scents and flavors for the cream," he says proudly.

Then there's the most important thing: his health. Since 2015, he's

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been dealing with kidney failure, which means he must undergo dialysis and adhere to a strict nutrition and exercise regimen to stay alive. Such stricture is not usually the order of the day for any musician.

"I feel good. I mean, I have my days where I'm fatigued, but for the most part, I'm fine. I most definitely had to switch up my eating habits and push myself to stay active."

On the track "Wasted," from his 2016 mixtape "Fear of a Free Planet," the MC yelled out: "You thought it was over?" in the triumph of a healthier future.

Did he ever wonder if he would be sidelined from the rap game? "Yeah, when I first got diagnosed, I was definitely worried, as I didn't know to what capacity I was sick, the timing of it all or how I would feel after dialysis. I learned quick."

As he got better and felt healthier, he began recording "Think Free," in 2017, not long after Donald Trump — one of the album's subjects — took office. As a Muslim and a concerned American, the president's stance toward Islam and religious freedom comes through loud and clear. "I think Trump's an idiot," he says. "I definitely disagree with a lot of the things he says and does. The country was better when Obama was in office. Things were civil with him. He had family values and was someone you could be proud of, and aspire to be."

The politics of "The Nation" and the health issues of "Blood Pressure" aren't the only things on Freeway's mind. There was much to say and different ways to say it through this album's songs. "I just really wanted to open up," Free says.

"I'm always interested in how people hear or view my work, and the one thing I've heard is that they like what I'm doing but that I don't open up, personally. Being that I had a health scare with a lot of things changing in my life, I just felt more open to being open with my fans. I touch base on the idea of relationships."

And once he opened up, he blossomed. "My best stuff is when I'm all-the-way honest. No exaggeration. When I've kept it straight in the past — 'What We Do is Wrong,' for instance — that was honest. That's what I was living, dealing with crack. That was real. That's where my best stuff comes from."

After recording for several labels in the past decade, he's back with Jay and his RocNation. Considering the beef his pal and fellow rapper Beanie Sigel had with the Roc-A-Fella label, his return is just as positive a move as making "Think Free," itself. Jay-Z was always about smart, insightful lyricists (which is why he signed those guys in the first place), so the move to RocNation is as much a spiritual decision as it is a business move.

"That's great, right? When I first signed with Jay, it was exciting. Amazing. I was young and fresh of the block. Signing to a label like his was a dream of mine, and I had accomplished a dream. Now, being able to sign back is mind-blowing.

"I didn't think that would ever happen again what with the tension of the past. But the past is past, I stayed true to myself and was a good person. I reached out to Jay, and he was ready. "

Anyone who thought the near-billionaire Jay-Z was unconnected to streets need only view his recent Trayvon Martin documentary, as well as consider his re-signing of Freeway.

"Jay's got his ear to the street like I have my ears to the streets. There's a lot going on in the world. And it's a blessing to be able to do it all now, at this level, and at this stage of my career," says Freeway. "I feel l like a new artist starting over."

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Aaron Nola is looking like the most valuable player in the National League. GETTY IMAGES

Phillies ace Aaron Nola may not win this year's NL Cy Young Award. Max Scherzer of the Washington Nationals seems like the current frontrunner. And hard-luck Jacob deGrom of the New York Mets could draw sympathy votes in a season where he's 5-7 despite a 1.85 ERA.

But Nola still may need to prep an acceptance speech for Major League Baseball's postseason awards banquet. Because no NL player has proven more worthy this season of the Most Valuable Player Award.

After the Phils' Sunday win over Miami — in which he threw six solid innings – Nola is now 12-3 with a 2.37 ERA. His .800 winning percentage is best in the NL, as is his stinginess allowing home runs (0.5 per nine innings). He whiffs 3.6 batters for each one he walks. And with a WHIP of 0.993, Nola projects to become the first-ever Phillies starter with at least a strikeout per inning and a WHIP under 1.000.

Here's one more stat: The team is 16-7 in games Nola started.

The Phillies entire rotation has been a revelation for the youngest team in baseball. But it's obvious to say that without Aaron Nola, these surprise contenders aren't leading the NL East. They aren't even in the playoff hunt.

That's why I take those two other pitchers out of this contest. As brilliant as deGrom is, his Mets are buried in the standings. The Nats – despite Scherzer – currently own the NL's ninth-best record. (Here's hoping I get to write that again in another month.)

And the MVP Award, by definition, should go to the player who most contributes to a winning team, right?

Well, uh … not exactly. The Baseball Writers Association of America, which governs the award, has no hard criteria for what defines the MVP. The BBWWA states that the winner need not come from a playoff team; that pitchers and designated hitters are eligible, and that voters should consider every aspect of a player, including character, disposition, loyalty and effort.

It's all pretty hazy.

Note, however, that the criterion specifically includes pitchers, a guideline that has eluded voters. Just two pitchers (Justin Verlander, Clayton Kershaw) have polished their own MVP Award in the past 25 years, largely because voters regard the Cy Young as pitchers' separate-but-equal reward.

It shouldn't be. This is about "most valuable." And, on that front this season, Nola shines as much as any position player.

For starters, Aaron Nola's WAR (wins above replacement) stands at 6.7. By contrast, Atlanta's Freddie Freeman is at 4.7, Colorado's Nolan Arenado is at 4.5 and Chicago's Javier Baez (the best player no one talks about) is at 4.6. The position player closest to Nola in WAR is Milwaukee center fielder Lorenzo Cain at 5.3.

Spoiler alert: Cain will not win the MVP.

Hey, there's still a third of a season to go. Nola should get another 10 starts, which will end up defining his year. We've never seen this 25-year-old pitch in critical September contests.

However, more dazzling performances down the stretch, and Aaron Nola could solidify his chances for honorary hardware.

More importantly, with enough of those great outings, he'll pitch the Phils into the postseason. And then he'll get the chance to earn the same honors that then-24-year-old Cole Hamels earned for this franchise back in 2008. If you recall, that turned out pretty well.

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With the *Viagra* Patent About to Expire, a New Sex Pill Takes the Spotlight

A patented pill costing less than $1 a dose stands to help millions of men with failing sex lives; no prescription will be required

By Ray Wilson
Associated Health Press

AHP – A new sex pill is set to take the spotlight with the Viagra patent about to expire. But unlike the former, it won't require a prescription and is priced just under a $1 a dose.

The new pill called *Vesele* is part of a new class of performance enhancers for men, which work instantaneously on the body and mind triggering arousal and firmer, harder erections.

Formulated with a special compound known as an "accelerator", *Vesele* can transport its active ingredients faster and more efficiently into the blood stream, where it begins to work its magic.

The patented ingredient blend initiates a process known as vasodilation, which causes arteries and vessels throughout the body to expand. This allows blood to flow directly to penis and genitals, resulting in harder erections which last longer. Cialis and Viagra are based around a simlilar concept.

But what makes *Vesele* so remarkable, and what these other sex pills can't do, is that also directs a small portion of this blood flow to the brain, which creates feelings of intense arousal. In laymen's terms, users become incredibly excited and turned on.

This is why the makers of *Vesele* say their pill has worked so effectively in clinical trials. It stimulates the two most important organs for great sex, the penis and the brain.

The Brain Erection Connection

Until now, medical researchers did not fully understand the brain-erection connection. It has now been made clear with *Vesele*. When both are supplied with a constant blood flow, men are harder and firmer for longer...and have unbelievable sex drives.

"Most of the research and treatment methods for men's sexual failures have focused on physiological factors and have neglected the emotional ones. For the leading sex drugs to work, like Cialis and Viagra, you need visual stimulation" explains Dr. Henry Esber, the creator of *Vesele*.

"And although they work for some men, the majority experience absolutely no fulfillment during sex.

According to research published by the National Institute of Health, 50% of men taking these drugs stop responding or can't tolerate their side effects...and on top of that they spend $50 per pill and it doesn't even work half the time.

This is what makes *Vesele* so different and effective. It floods the blood stream with key ingredients which cause arteries all over the body to expand. The patented accelerator speeds up this process even more.

The result is a rush of blood flow to the penis and brain, helping to create an impressive erection and a surging desire for sex. Often, this is all men need to get going. And when taken regularly, many men say they are energized and aroused all day."

Great Sex At Any Age

With the conclusion of their latest human clinical use survey trial, Dr. Esber and his team are now offering *Vesele* in the US. And regardless of the market, its sales are exploding.

Men across the country are eager to get their hands on the new pill and according to the research, they should be.

In the trial above, as compared to baseline, men taking *Vesele* saw a staggering 85% improvement in erection hardness over a four-month period. Their erections also lasted twice as long.

These same men also experienced an astounding 82% increase in the desire for sex (libido/sex drive) and an even greater improvement in overall satisfaction and ability to satisfy their partners.

Many men taking *Vesele* described feeling horny and aroused through the day. The anticipation before sex was amazing. They were also easily turned on. Their moods were more upbeat and positive, too.

Faster Absorption into the Blood Stream

Vesele is made up of three specialized ingredients: two clinical strength vasodilators and a patented absorption enhancer often called an accelerator. According to an enormous amount of clinical data, each is very safe.

Research shows that with age, many men lose their desire and interest in sex. They also struggle to produce an erection firm enough for penetration.

And although there are many theories as to why this happens (including a loss in testosterone) one thing is certain, inadequate blood flow is virtually always to blame. That's why sex drug manufacturers focus on blood flow, it makes your erection hard.

But what's more surprising, and what these manufacturers have failed to consider, is that lack of blood flow can also kill your sex drive. That's because blood supplies energy for the brain. This energy is required for creating brainwaves that cause excitability and arousal.

Studies show the *Vesele* stimulates the entire cardiovascular system, including the arteries that lead to both the brain and penis. The extreme concentration of the ingredients combined with the accelerator ensures that this process starts quickly.

The sexual benefits of *Vesele* are also multiplied as its ingredients build up in the system over time. This is why many men take it every single day.

Expiring Patent Opens the Door to a New Sex Pill: *Vesele* is a new pill that cost just $1 a dose does not require a prescription. It works on both body and mind to increase arousal and erection hardness.

Recent Studies Show Positive Effects on Women

In the same study referenced throughout, *Vesele* was also shown to have an amazing (and somewhat surprising) effect on women too. That's because the same arteries and vessels that carry blood and oxygen to the brain and genitals are the same in men and women.

"In our most recent study, women taking *Vesele* saw a stunning 52% improvement in arousal and sex drive. Perhaps more impressive, they also experienced a 57% improvement in lubrication.

You can imagine why some couples are taking *Vesele* together. Everything feels better. Everything works better. Everyone performs better. It's truly amazing."

A New Frontier of Non-Prescription Sex Pills

With daily use, *Vesele* is helping men (and women) restore failing sex lives and overcome sexual lets downs without side effect or expense.

Through a patented absorption enhancer, the *Vesele* formula hits the bloodstream quickly, resulting in phenomenal improvements in erection firmness and hardness. By boosting blood flow to the brain, users also experience sexual urges and arousal they often haven't felt in years.

Where to Find Vesele

This is the official release of *Vesele* in Pennsylvania. As such, the company is offering a special discounted supply to anyone who calls within the next 48 hours.

A special hotline number and discounted pricing has been created for all Pennsylvania residents. Discounts will be available starting today at 6:00AM and will automatically be applied to all callers.

Your Toll-Free Hotline number is 1-800-749-1047 and will only be open for the next 48 hours. Only a limited discounted supply of *Vesele* is currently available in your region.

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2008 Phillies show current team what it's like to win here

The 2008 World Series champions were honored this past weekend.

JON MARKS
sports@metro.us

Jamie Moyer was a key pitcher for the 2008 Phillies. GETTY IMAGES

Even though they are in first place at the moment, it's still hard to imagine the 2018 Phillies ultimately having their own Brad Lidge moment.

But perhaps they'll continue to surprise us, then reconvene in a decade to talk about the time reliever Seranthony Dominquez blew away Red Sox' star Mookie Betts to clinch it for Gabe Kapler's gang the way Lidge got Tampa Bay's Eric Hinske to chase his 0-2 slider and make those 2008 Phils "World Champions of Baseball," as the late Harry Kalas squealed.

They celebrated that moment again on Sunday, handing out Lidge bobbleheads, before Lidge, Ryan Howard, Jimmy Rollins and 16 others from that team — including a warmly greeted Jayson Werth — took the field to commemorate the 10th anniversary of their crowning achievement.

It capped a memorable weekend filled with emotion, ranging from Shane Victorino's tearful retirement back in a Phillies uniform one last time Friday, to Brandy Halladay's gut-wrenching tribute to her late husband, Roy, upon his induction into the Phillies' Wall of Fame, to Lidge and manager Charlie Manuel extolling the fans as being one of the keys to their success.

And if nothing else it showed Rhys Hoskins, Aaron Nola, Odubel Herrera, Maikel Franco and company that once you win in Philadelphia you'll never be forgotten.

"I was in high school and didn't really understand the value of what it meant when they won in 1980," recalled Souderton native Jamie Moyer, who went 16-7 for the 2008 Phils and pitched Game 3 of the World Series vs. Tampa Bay.

"But 28 years later, I was older and part of the team, so you look at it through a different set of eyes," he said. "Even today seeing Shane retire and being around the fans you're reminded of it."

Even Werth, who left town a few years later for the greener (as in $126 million in green) pastures of NL East rival Washington and subsequently became the object of the boo birds disaffection.

Admittedly, he did not know what to expect following his recent retirement after deciding to join the party.

"This is the first time I've been here with a smile on my face in a while," said the 39-year-old Werth, before being met with a rousing ovation. "It would mean quite a bit being accepted after what's transpired the last seven years."

"Because these guys resurrected me, essentially, so I always hold a special place in my heart for the Phillies."

He's hardly alone, on a team that bounced back with a vengeance from a disappointing 2007 NLDS sweep by the Colorado Rockies. "I walked in our clubhouse after that and there were some people down and mad that we hadn't accomplished a lot," said Manuel, the franchise's winningest manager.

"When they came back in 2008 they were ready to go. I didn't have to say very much," he added. "They were determined and thought they were the best team. I didn't have to talk about winning because we didn't expect to lose."

That's a far cry from what Pat Burrell encountered in 2010 with the upstart San Francisco Giants, who knocked off the Phils in the NLCS, then beat Texas to complete an unlikely run.

"It was a magical type year because we weren't supposed to win," said Burrell, who left Philadelphia after 2008 for Tampa, before heading to San Francisco. "But nothing can compare to this, because we were a work in progress for so long."

"All these guys came into their own at the right time."

A decade later, despite winning four other division titles, that remains their high water mark: a bond that will never be broken.

"It's something everybody hopes to have the opportunity to do before they retire," said Lidge, the "perfect" closer with 48 saves in 48 tries.

"To have that bond with the rest of your teammates and have that ring to show people. There's no personal accomplishment to match that."

However, there's only one thing Lidge and the rest would like now, just as Mike Schmidt, Steve Carlton and the rest of the 1980 champion Phillies wanted, too.

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Why Haven't Senior Homeowners Been Told These Facts?

Keep reading if you own a home in the U.S. and were born before 1955.

It's a well-known fact that for many senior citizens in the U.S. their home is their single biggest asset, often accounting for more than 50% of their total net worth.

Yet, according to new statistics from the mortgage industry, senior homeowners in the U.S. are now sitting on more than **6.1 trillion dollars** of unused home equity.[1] With people now living longer than ever before and home prices back up again, ignoring this **"hidden wealth"** may prove to be short sighted.

All things considered, it's not surprising that more than a million homeowners have already used a government-insured Home Equity Conversion Mortgage or "HECM" loan to turn their home equity into extra cash for retirement.

However, today, there are still millions of eligible homeowners who could benefit from this FHA-insured loan but may simply not be aware of this "**retirement secret**."

Some homeowners think HECM loans sound "too good to be true." After all, you get the cash you need out of your home but you have no more monthly mortgage payments.

NO MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENTS?[2] EXTRA CASH?

It's a fact: no monthly mortgage payments are required with a government-insured HECM loan;[2] however the homeowners are still responsible for paying for the maintenance of their home, property taxes, homeowner's insurance and, if required, their HOA fees.

Another fact many are not aware of is that HECM reverse mortgages first took hold when President Reagan signed the FHA Reverse Mortgage Bill into law 29 years ago in order to help senior citizens remain in their homes.

Today, HECM loans are simply an effective way for homeowners 62 and older to get the extra cash they need to enjoy retirement.

Although today's HECM loans have been improved to provide even greater financial protection for homeowners, there are still many misconceptions.

For example, a lot of people mistakenly believe the home must be paid off in full in order to qualify for a HECM loan, which is not the case. In fact, one key advantage of a HECM is that the proceeds will first be used to pay off any existing liens on the property, which frees up cash flow, a huge blessing for seniors living on a fixed income. Unfortunately, many senior homeowners who might be better off with HECM loan don't even bother to get more information because of rumors they've heard.

That's a shame because HECM loans are helping many senior homeowners live a better life.

In fact, a recent survey by American Advisors Group (AAG), the nation's number one HECM lender, found that over 90% of their clients are satisfied with their loans.

While these special loans are not for everyone, they can be a real lifesaver for senior homeowners.

FACT: In 1988, President Reagan signed an FHA bill that put HECM loans into law.

The cash from a HECM loan can be used for any purpose. Many people use the money to save on interest charges by paying off credit cards or other high-interest loans. Other common uses include making home improvements, paying off medical bills or helping other family members. Some people simply need the extra cash for everyday expenses while others are now using it as a "safety net" for financial emergencies.

If you're a homeowner age 62 or older, you owe it to yourself to learn more so that you can make an informed decision. Homeowners who are interested in learning more can request a free 2018 HECM loan Information Kit and free Educational DVD by calling American Advisors Group toll-free at **1-800-791-1598**.

At no cost or obligation, the professionals at AAG can help you find out if you qualify and also answer common questions such as:

1. What's the government's role?
2. How much money might I get?
3. Who owns the home after I take out a HECM loan?

You may be pleasantly surprised by what you discover when you call AAG for more information today.

[1]Source: http://reversemortgagedaily.com/2016/06/21/seniors-home-equity-grows-to-6-trillion-reverse-mortgage-opportunity. [2]If you qualify and your loan is approved, a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) must pay off any existing mortgage(s). With a HECM loan, no monthly mortgage payment is required. A HECM increases the principal mortgage loan amount and decreases home equity (it is a negative amortization loan). AAG works with other lenders and financial institutions that offer HECMs. To process your request for a loan, AAG may forward your contact information to such lenders for your consideration of HECM programs that they offer. When the loan is due and payable, some or all of the equity in the property no longer belongs to borrowers, who may need to sell the home or otherwise repay the loan with interest from other proceeds. AAG charges an origination fee, mortgage insurance premium, closing costs and servicing fees (added to the balance of the loan). The balance of the loan grows over time and AAG charges interest on the balance. Interest is not tax-deductible until the loan is partially or fully repaid. Borrowers are responsible for paying property taxes and homeowner's insurance (which may be substantial). We do not establish an escrow account for disbursements of these payments. A set-aside account can be set up to pay taxes and insurance and may be required in some cases. Borrowers must occupy home as their primary residence and pay for ongoing maintenance; otherwise the loan becomes due and payable. The loan also becomes due and payable when the last borrower, or eligible non-borrowing surviving spouse, dies, sells the home, permanently moves out, defaults on taxes or insurance payments, or does not otherwise comply with the loan terms. American Advisors Group (AAG) is headquartered at 3800 W. Chapman Ave., 3rd & 7th Floors, Orange CA, 92868. (Licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Banking 28356),. V2017.08.23_OR

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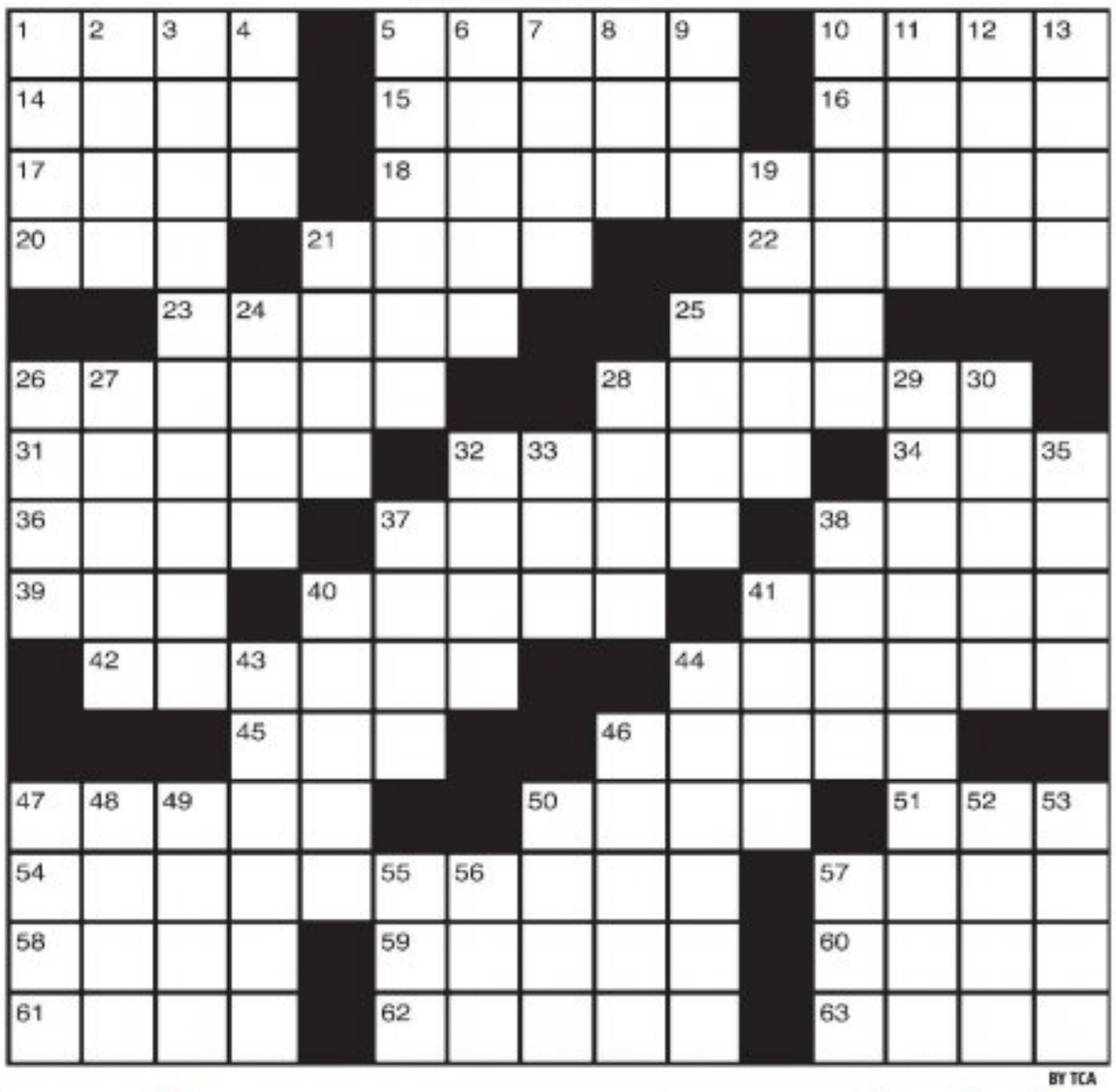

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ACROSS

1 Flows back
5 Fast
10 Cain's victim
14 Applaud
15 Without companions
16 California's __ Linda
17 Sacred
18 __ cure; supernatural healing
20 Nocturnal bird
21 In __; actually
22 Hospital employee
23 __ cologne; perfume
25 Knight's title
26 Ms. Streisand
28 Most recent
31 Post or Brontë
32 Bananas
34 Rollaway
36 Melody
37 Narrow boat
38 Lawn mower brand
39 Cool __ cucumber
40 Actor Keith
41 Not as good
42 __ de corps; camaraderie
44 Ropers' competitions
45 __ the wrong way; irritate
46 Pod with a chocolate flavor
47 Look for expectantly
50 Musical group
51 Large tree
54 Sickening
57 Gift-wrapper's need
58 Aware of the duplicity of
59 Unruly throng
60 Architect Christopher
61 Marquee light
62 Williams & Rooney
63 Probability

DOWN

1 Repeated sound
2 Hard hit
3 Toe dancers
4 Undercover agent
5 Hotel chain
6 Wonderland visitor
7 Harbor town
8 "Time __ Bottle"; Jim Croce hit
9 Four months hence: abbr.
10 Attraction; charm
11 Rude person
12 Large flightless birds
13 Operate with a high-powered beam
19 Oneness
21 In a __; raging
24 Competent
25 Rational
26 Alpha's follower
27 Make laugh
28 Crazy as a __
29 Where to view game results
30 Human trunk
32 Café au __; creamy coffee
33 "Cat __ Hot Tin Roof"
35 Foot digits
37 Baby's bed
38 Hubbub
40 Cruel man
41 Give one's __; make a promise
43 Penitentiary
44 Stoves
46 Dieter's no-no
47 Shortly
48 Diminish
49 Car
50 Chirper
52 Mimicked
53 Berry & Griffey
55 Cry of discovery
56 2,000 pounds
57 Afternoon hour

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T	R	O	O	P	E	R	S	N	Z
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O	H	L	D	I	N	Y	G	T	K
F	S	D	L	I	W	V	W	N	N
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I	C	K

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3	1	6		4				
7	9			3	5			
1					3			5
8	6	4	5		9	3	1	2
5			4					6
			3	9			4	1
				1		7	2	9
9			2			6		8

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	T	Y	C	O	O	N			C	A	N	Y	O	N
			A	R	M			A	S	K	E	W		
C	H	E	R	U	B			L	I	E		H	E	S
R	O	L	E	M	O	D	E	L		I	D	E	A	L
A	L	M	S		N	O	M	E		T	E	R	R	A
B	E	S	S		E	A	S	Y			F	E	L	T

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